



Charlotte City Council
Workforce & Business Development Committee
Summary
September 14, 2020

COMMITTEE AGENDA TOPICS

Introduction of New CBI Program Manager (No Action Required)
Workforce Development Committee Referrals Discussion (No Action Required)
Open for Business Initiative Update (No Action Required)

COMMITTEE INFORMATION

Committee Members Present: James Mitchell (Chair), Tariq Bokhari (Vice Chair), Dimple Ajmera, Malcolm Graham and Renee Johnson

Others: Councilmember Victoria Watlington
Denada Jackson, Office of Constituent Services

Guests: Danielle Frazier, President & Chief Executive Officer, Charlotte Works
Kevin Loux, Director of Labor Market Intelligence, Charlotte Works

Staff Resource: Tracy Dodson, City Manager's Office
Emily Cantrell, Economic Development
Alyssa Brown, Economic Development
Jenae Valentine, Economic Development
Phil Reiger, General Services
Kay Elmore, General Services
Steven Coker, General Services
Shaunne Thomas, General Services

Meeting Duration: 2:00pm-4:00pm

ATTACHMENTS

1. Agenda – September 14, 2020
2. Presentation – Workforce Development Committee Referrals, Thrive Budget

DISCUSSION HIGHLIGHTS

Chairman Mitchell called the virtual meeting to order and asked Committee members, City staff and guests to introduce themselves. He then turned the meeting over to Assistant City Manager Tracy Dodson to introduce the agenda topics.

Introduction of New CBI Program Manager

Phil Reiger, General Services Director introduced Steven Coker, Charlotte Business INclusion's new Program Manager. Mr. Coker comes to Charlotte from Syracuse, New York with over 20 years of public/private and academic experience. Over the last three weeks, Mr. Coker has begun his work getting acclimated to Charlotte and evaluating Charlotte Business INclusion's program to implement a new strategic plan. Future updates will be provided to the Workforce & Business Development Committee meetings.

Mr. Coker shared his excitement to join the City of Charlotte. He also gave background information on his career and experience around supplier and diversity. He attended college on Staten Island, New York and Law School in Florida. Mr. Coker's former positions include: Assistant District Attorney in Brooklyn, New York, Syracuse University working on diversity Issues, former minority enterprise business owner, President of the Minority Contractors Association of Central New York and Director of Diversity for Sony Upstate Medical University. Mr. Coker noted his commitment to make Charlotte Business INclusion's program a national model and encouraged the Committee Members and others to reach out to him to collaborate in this effort.

Councilmember Mitchell and the Committee as well as City staff welcomed Mr. Coker to Team Charlotte.

Workforce Development Committee Referrals Discussion

Tracy Dodson started the presentation and gave a high-level overview of the four workforce development committee referrals discussed at the July 28th meeting. She shared the timeline for reviewing each referral (September-October), the guiding questions to address unemployment and what the City could do from a policy perspective to eliminate barriers for people in high unemployment zip codes around the City. Ms. Dodson also addressed how the referrals would be grouped and that the policy for guiding the City's investment would be discussed at the next meeting. Today's presentation by staff and guests centered around the data research and how to address the challenges/barriers around workforce, including:

- A plan to reduce high unemployment
- Policy (criteria required for when city funding is included)
- A plan for Corridors of Opportunity
- Strengthening within Diversion program

In addition to those unemployed, Ms. Dodson noted the hospitality and professional services had been hit hard and that staff would be working on a comprehensive solution to address these issues.

Emily Cantrell shared the unemployment rate was below 4% in Mecklenburg County prior to COVID-19. Some of the jobs came back; however, the numbers had been fluctuating over the last six months.

Kevin Louix of Charlotte Works and Alyssa Brown, Economic Development Department gave a joint presentation on labor market data on each of the Corridors of Opportunity (28206, 28208, 28212, 28216) showing the top industry, median wage, poverty rate, and common barriers to employment found in each area, noting each corridor's unique strengths and opportunities for development and job creation. Ms. Brown shared the data presented was researched from N.C. Works, the U.S. Census, American community Survey and N.C. Commerce.

Danielle Frazier, President & CEO of Charlotte Works, continued the presentation and gave an overview of Charlotte Works' efforts to lead and strengthen the workforce eco-system with local partners as well as analyzing gaps and strategies to address overlap in services. She shared their mission and mandate to convene and lead the workforce system for Charlotte-Mecklenburg County and to provide workforce services and career pathways for the community. Charlotte Works is also addressing economic mobility challenges by placing more career centers in the community and career advisors with their partners. Ms. Frazier emphasized the importance of the City's support around job creation and opportunities through the Economic Development Department in real time to help Charlotte Works prepare and connect talent and to build capacity within existing programs.

Councilmember Mitchell asked for Ms. Frazier to provide feedback on Charlotte Works possible commitment to administer workforce youth programs CMPD is currently engaged in.

Emily Cantrell gave an overview of the job market supply and demand and the City's role to address the challenges of unemployment. In the coming months, the City will do a more in-depth analysis of labor and job market. Ms. Cantrell also shared economic development efforts to drive supply and demand around intentional business recruitment and retention strategies, talent development acquisition strategies, and Thrive COVID strategies.

Jenae Valentine provided an update on peer city research and their workforce development initiatives as well as how they approach public/private partnerships. Cities included Seattle, Nashville, Austin, Atlanta, Detroit, Houston and Cleveland.

The Committee's discussion produced the following feedback:

- Look at new data in the zip codes 28213, 28216 and around I-85/Sugar Creek on disability and those formerly incarcerated
- Define "Strengthening with Diversion Program"
- Bring back list of employers who accept misdemeanor records
- Add Hispanic demographic in the 28212 area code
- Include employment data for the immigrant and refugee population
- How do we connect transportation?
- What are the City staffing requirements for peer city research?
- Process on connecting citizens to job opportunities with companies recruited to Charlotte
- Data from small businesses on the skills they require

Tracy Dodson reemphasized the City's commitment to work with our community partners to guide the conversation to create a strategy for the City's workforce initiative.

Open for Business Initiative Update

Tracy Dodson provided an update on the Open for Business Initiative around the Thrive Budget, totaling \$17,500,000. She presented the Committee with a chart outlining the budget and status for each program, noting the budget was originally \$15,000,000 and the remaining funds were rolled into other initiatives.

- Workforce Partner Support
(applications launched September 4th and will close on September 18th)
- Thrive Hiring Grant
(ongoing - offering grants to companies hiring people that have been displaced by COVID-19)
- Open for Business Platform
(ongoing - press release will go out next week on new initiatives)
- RENEW Career Cohort
(Cohort two will kick off October/November)
- Resilient “ReUp” Program
(will launch on October 5th - helping companies pivot to be more resilient)
- Innovate Business Grant Program
(Phase III starts October 23rd - compliments work Charlotte Center City Partners and Honeywell has done)
- Impacted Relief Fund
(launch mid-September/live late September - for hotels, restaurant food and beverage)
- Access to Capital Implementation Costs
(payments ongoing for community works, infrastructure and administration)

The meeting adjourned at 4:00pm